

Accessibility Strategy

Southend on Sea Borough Council

Southend Borough Council's strategy for the inclusion of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in educational settings
Updated 2018

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1. Vision and priorities

Our vision

Our vision is “Success for all”.

We will work to ensure children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) have access to high quality local provision that meets their needs. We will provide help and support as early as possible and provide them with opportunities to maximise their life chances, to make good progress and achieve outcomes that prepare them for adulthood.

Southend Borough Council is committed to improving access for all pupils and young people, but particularly for those with a disability, ensuring equality of opportunity. Our vision is:

- **We will work with all key partners to ensure all children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities have the opportunities and ambition to succeed.**
- **We will reduce the barriers to learning and provide help and support as early as possible to ensure good outcomes and future life chances.**

Southend Council’s vision is for all children and young people with SEND to have access to an inclusive learning experience across all of its educational settings thereby providing opportunities for realising aspirations, achieving potential and participating fully in education and wider society.

That inclusive learning experience should take place in the pupil’s local community alongside their peers wherever possible.

Commitment:

Southend Borough Council will work effectively with its partners to ensure that its’ vision for children and young people with SEND is realised and to help all educational settings identify and achieve their own aims.

Our 2016-19 SEN Strategy to support this vision entitled ‘Working together to improve outcomes’ sets out the 5 priorities for achieving this in Southend:

Priority 1: Timely Intervention – Improve the identification and assessment of SEND across agencies in order to offer help at the earliest opportunity; Share information effectively to help parents and carers ‘tell their story once’.

Priority 2: Partnership working – Work in partnership with parents, carers and young people to provide information and develop the local offer of provision; Work in partnership across agencies so that parents and carers experience a co-ordinated

and joined up service for children with complex and acute needs; Ensure a smooth progression to adulthood for all young people with SEND.

Priority 3: Quality and effective SEND provision - Commission or deliver a range of high quality provision for all children and young people with SEND; Provide access to mainstream and specialist provision and outreach services that work together flexibly to meet children's needs and offer a choice for parents and carers.

Priority 4: Raise attainment and expectations– Set sights high for every child and young person so that their hopes and aspirations can be realised both now and in their future lives.

Priority 5: Ensure value for money – Resources are used effectively, are cost effective and distributed equitably and transparently with performance monitoring and measurement of impact; Provide all children and young people with the option of a personal budget as an integral part of the Education Health and Care plan.

The 2018/19 Accessibility Strategy has been developed to build on the existing good practice across the borough and ensure that this commitment to improve continues to be met and strengthened through the reforms introduced by the Children and Families Act 2014, associated Regulations and the requirements of the 0-25 SEND Code of Practice August 2014.

This strategy links with other strategic planning processes such as Early Help, Partnership, Choice and Ambition, Southend-on-Sea's Strategy for children age 0-25 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities 2013-2016.

The current SEN Strategy will be refreshed in 2019 to reflect the recently developed SEN 3 Year Journey which maps the future strategic direction for SEN in Southend. The Accessibility Strategy will be reviewed to reflect the emerging strategic direction clearly laid out in the SEN 3 Year Journey.

Principles of inclusion:

Diversity should be celebrated, equality of opportunity promoted and all children, young people and families treated with respect:

- All children and young people should have regular opportunities to learn, play and develop alongside each other in their local community.
- Barriers to participation and achievement should be overcome as far as possible and children and young people encouraged in their aspirations.
- Children and young people should be supported by adults who work in partnership with them, their families and the other professionals that support them.
- Cultures, policies and practice should be developed to ensure the inclusion of all children and young people.

Key priorities:

Southend Council's responsibilities under the Equalities Act 2010, its vision and feedback from stakeholders has led to the establishment of these key priorities:

1. Ensure compliance of the Local Authority and all educational settings for which it is responsible with the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.
2. Maximise inclusion and the feeling of inclusion for all children and young people with SEND in their educational setting and the wider community.
3. Increase the extent to which children and young people with SEND can participate in the curriculum, including the enrichment curriculum, in all educational settings.
4. Improve the physical environment of all educational settings to increase the extent to which children and young people with SEND can fully access education.
5. Enhance the delivery of information, advice and guidance to all children and young people with SEND and their families.

2. Key messages**Awareness**

- There needs to be more awareness about disability, equality and diversity in both educational settings and the wider community.
- Young people want to feel that staff and other students don't see their disability first.
- Most educational settings have inclusive cultures, policies and practices but some need to be more inclusive.

Inclusion

- Children and young people with SEND want to have more of a voice in consultation groups such as school councils.
- Children and young people with SEND want to know who they can turn to if they experience bullying in an educational setting.
- Transport arrangements need to help with increasing participation.

Curriculum Access

- All staff need to know about, understand and act on the additional needs of children and young people with SEND.
- Children and young people with SEND should be fully included in all curriculum areas including physical education.
- Children and young people with SEND should be able to participate fully in the enrichment curriculum.

Physical Access

- Although almost all educational settings are physically accessible, settings should ensure that accessibility is not compromised, such as using rooms/facilities for another purpose.
- The need for physical accessibility must be anticipated as far as possible.

Information and Advice

- Information for parent carers and young people should be written and made available with everyone's needs in mind, taking into account barriers such as SEND and language.

3. Duties

Local authority accessibility strategies and school accessibility plans are a requirement of Schedule 10 of the **Equality Act 2010**. As well as general duties for public bodies, the Equality Act states specific duties, mainly:

- not to treat pupils with SEND less favourably and
- to undertake reasonable steps to avoid putting pupils with SEND at a substantial disadvantage.

The **SEND Code of Practice: 0-25** promotes inclusive education and describes how the Equality Act and the **Children and Families Act 2014** work together to ensure this:

- The Children and Families Act 2014 secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEN should be educated and the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for disabled people.⁵
- Putting children/young people and their families at the centre is a key message of the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 and is at the heart of the LA's strategic planning.
- Local authorities must ensure the participation of children, their parents and young people in decision-making.
- More information on the legislative context can be found in Appendix 1.

➤ 4. Strategic direction

This Accessibility Strategy works alongside **Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy 2016-19** for children and young people 0-25 years, the key aims of which is:

- to ensure children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) have access to high quality local provision that meets their needs.
- to have high aspirations for all children and young people
- to ensure that the achievement gap between those with SEND and their peers is narrowed
- to include the majority of children and young people in their local schools, settings and colleges.

The strategy is driven and monitored by the SEN Strategic Board which in turn reports to the Success for All Children's Board and Health and Wellbeing Board. The SEN Strategic Board has members from education, children's and adult's social care, Southend CCG, Southend Family Voice, Southend Carers Forum, mainstream and special schools who have contributed in the consultation and development of this strategy.

Progress towards these aims is monitored by the SEND Board including representation from the Young People's SEND Board.

The SEND Strategy's aims are underpinned by the principles and aims of the **Success for All Children and Young People's Plan**.

As stated in the SEND Strategy, the successful inclusion of children and young people in their local early years setting, school or college is well established in Southend and this principle will be protected and supported.

Although the Equality Act talks about schools in relation to accessibility strategies and plans, the LA's vision extends to all educational settings.

Local Authorities must, for the schools for which they are responsible, prepare an accessibility strategy based on the same principles as the accessibility plans that schools are required to provide.

This strategy seeks to improve the access for disabled children and young people to Southend schools, and to increase the opportunity for them to take advantage of the education and associated services provided by schools and Early Years settings.

The accessibility strategy emphasises the need for partnership working and collaboration between agencies, to ensure pupils and young people with disabilities learn, play and develop alongside their peer group, in schools, which respond positively to a range of disabilities.

There is a need to recognise and overcome potential barriers to learning by promoting participation and success for all by providing a broad and balanced differentiated curriculum in all schools and Early Years settings and developing the teaching support provided to deliver this.

5. Priorities

The priorities in this Accessibility Strategy are realised through the LA's SEND **Accessibility Action Plan**, a living document which sets out desired outcomes, the actions to achieve them and how progress is measured.

A key aspect of the action plan is how educational settings are supported by the **Accessibility Audit Tool**.

Priority 1: Ensure compliance of the Local Authority and all educational settings for which it is responsible with the requirements of Schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Awareness of the Equality Act

Everyone working in and alongside all educational settings should be aware of the Equality Act and its implications for children and young people, their families and the wider community and aware of their duties within the Act.

Equality Act and Accessibility Training

The Accessibility Action Plan sets out how the LA provides and signposts training on the Equality Act, diversity and disability for educational settings.

Provision of the Accessibility Audit Tool and support for educational settings

The Accessibility Audit Tool supports educational settings in assessing their compliance with the relevant legislation. Through provision of the Audit Tool and accompanying support, the LA will support settings with:

- **celebrating** the strengths of all children and young people
- ensuring the **inclusivity** of their overall policies and practices as well as one-off events and activities
- encouraging the development of inclusive **attitudes and actions**
- writing an **Accessibility Plan** and **SEN Information Report** in partnership with stakeholders

Priority 2: Maximise inclusion and the feeling of inclusion for all children and young people with SEND in their educational setting and the wider community.

- **ensure all children and young people have a voice**, e.g. including those with SEND in the school council and asking pupils what works well now and what would improve confidence, independence and access in the future
- **arrange personalised and creative support** so that all children and young people can access all activities
- **ensure the inclusion** of children and young people with medical needs
- **ensure that transition from setting to setting** is carefully planned and personalised for children and young people with SEND.

Priority 3: Increase the extent to which children and young people with SEND can participate in the curriculum in all educational settings, including the enrichment curriculum. All children and young people should have access to high quality teaching that focuses on inclusive practice and breaks down barriers to learning.

Provision of the Accessibility Audit Tool and support for educational settings

Schools and other educational settings are responsible for providing a broad and balanced curriculum and play a key role in planning to increase access to the curriculum for all pupils. Through provision of the Audit Tool and accompanying support, the LA will support settings in ensuring that they are:

- **using a graduated approach** when meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND, using the 'assess, plan, do, review' cycle to inform this
- **providing staff with the opportunity for regular and updated training** relating to additional needs, e.g. physical education staff being trained in including children and young people with disabilities in the curriculum
- **using auxiliary aids effectively** to ensure children and young people can be included in the curriculum e.g. providing coloured layovers for pupils with dyslexia
- **prioritising and monitoring staff planning** for children and young people with SEND
- **deploying staff effectively** to provide flexible support and facilitate independent learning
- **thinking creatively** about how children and young people with SEND can be involved in activities, trips and residential stays

- **involving children and young people** and their families in the review of individual plans regarding curriculum access.

Core services offered by SBC through the SEND Team

SBC will ensure that core and bespoke training in meeting individual needs continues to be made available. As part of this offer, assessment, advice and support will be made available including signposting to a range of accredited training. Structured school support will continue to be offered, to build the capacity of educational settings.

Southend will aim to:

- Continue to support the good links between mainstream and special schools, providing opportunities for sharing expertise and knowledge;
- Continue to support the SENCO network and cluster groups as a mechanism to share good practice and enhance skills of SENCO's;
- Provide SENCO's with the opportunity to undertake accredited training;
- Continue to offer training for all schools from agencies such as SETSA, on a range of curriculum and specialist topics;
- Continue to offer specialist training for teachers who wish to specialise in teaching pupils with visual or hearing impairment;
- Work with schools to remove any barriers to achievement and educational access;
- Ensure all policies, advice and support to schools reflects the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 and subsequent legislation in relation to DDA and SEND;
- Support clusters of schools to develop practice and self-evaluation;
- Provide accessible information on the range of services offered by the Department for People;
- Develop further the multi-agency links, particularly those with Health and the voluntary sector.

Priority 4: Improve the physical environment of all educational settings to increase the extent to which children and young people with SEND can take advantage of education.

All children and young people should be able to attend an educational setting with an accessible environment that enhances their ability to take part in the curriculum and does not put them at a disadvantage compared to their peers.

Supporting Schools to Improve Accessibility

All schools as part of their Dedicated Schools Grant Element 1 and 2 funding arrangements are provided with resource to enable them to improve access for pupils and meet the statutory requirements of the Equality Act, 2010.

Any significant Capital funding requirements of schools to make them more accessible can be addressed to SBC for consideration where this may be a priority.

Southend Borough Council Capital Projects Funding requests are considered by SBC and funding allocation decisions are made on a child-centred basis.

In some cases, rather than making building adaptations, accessibility issues can be 'managed' at a school level, for example swapping an inaccessible upstairs classroom with a ground floor classroom rather than installing an expensive lift. SBC work closely to ensure; early identification of need, accessibility and effective use of resources.

Provision of an Accessibility Audit Tool and support for educational settings

The Accessibility Audit Tool supports settings in ensuring that they can:

- **identify adaptations needed**, including adaptations for children and young people with sensory needs
- **create solutions** to accessibility issues if adaptations are not possible, such as moving groups to accessible areas
- **use consultation effectively**, asking children and young people about physical accessibility, e.g. access to toilets and changing facilities
- **think creatively** about classroom interiors, e.g. making calm, low-sensory stimulation areas available, thinking about the use of curtains to reduce noise levels, removing clutter etc.

Priority 5: Enhance the delivery of information, advice and guidance to all children and young people with SEND and their families.

Information, advice and guidance should be readily available in an accessible format for all children and young people with SEND and their families. In addition to ensuring that LA documents consistently follow the corporate standards of plain English and the availability of alternative formats, effective provision of information, advice and guidance will be available as follows:

Provision of information through the Local Offer

Southend's Local Offer sets out in one place the support available to families of children and young people with SEND in Southend. It also gives information about the support available for educational settings to enable access.

To ensure the effectiveness of the Local Offer SBC:

- **encourages educational settings** to link their Accessibility Plan and SEN Information Report to the Local Offer
- **reviews and updates** the Local Offer regularly, responding to feedback from professionals, children and young people and their families
- **makes the Local Offer available** online and through Libraries.

The Local Offer responds to the needs of the community. Professionals and children and young people with SEND and their families are invited to comment at any time on the effectiveness of the Local Offer. The comments are published several times a year in a 'you said – we did' format.

Provision of support and guidance by commissioning

Southend IASS (the Special Educational Need and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service) is commissioned by the SBC to provide information, support and

advice to children and young people with SEND and their families. It also supports educational settings by providing advocacy, independent advice and encouraging partnership working.

Provision of an Accessibility Audit Tool and support for educational settings

- Through the Audit Tool, settings are encouraged to ensure that, among other things: all of their **written information is accessible** to all pupils, considering print size, plain English, symbols, verbal explanations, additional/different approaches, etc.
- **signposting to information**, advice and guidance is effective, for example the [Southend Local Offer](#), [Southend IASS](#) and [SBC website](#)

6. School accessibility plans

Just as Section 10 of the Equality Act requires local authorities to prepare an accessibility strategy for schools for which it is responsible, it also requires the responsible body of a school to prepare an accessibility plan. This strategy and the Accessibility Action Plan, Accessibility Audit Tool and Accessibility Plan Template aim to support all schools in being able to meet this duty in writing and publishing their plan.

A school accessibility plan is a plan for:

- increasing the extent to which disabled pupils can participate in the school's curriculum
- improving the physical environment of the school for the purpose of increasing the extent to which disabled pupils are able to take advantage of education and benefits, facilities or services provided or offered by the school and
- improving the delivery to disabled pupils of information which is readily accessible to pupils who are not disabled.

Accessibility plans should be adequately resourced, regularly reviewed and revised as necessary e.g. when accommodation improvements or repair and maintenance work are being planned, where the organisation of the curriculum is being considered or school activities are organised. It should also be reported to parents/carers annually.

The Ofsted framework strengthens the requirements relating to equality of access and narrowing the gap in achievement. Governors should report annually on the impact of their school's arrangements for children and young people with SEND and progress made with implementing the accessibility plan. All other educational settings are encouraged to have accessibility plans.

It is suggested that the School's Accessibility Plan is published on the school website, and hard copies can be provided upon request. The school should be prepared to make available versions of the plan in other, accessible formats to meet the needs of those requesting it, i.e. parents with English as a foreign language.

Further information/support

- The LA provides an Accessibility Plan Template which can be found on the Local Offer
- The Equality Act 2010 and schools - Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities (see Appendix 1).
- Lighting Guide 05 :Lighting for Education (SLL LG5) – separate sections for pupils with Hearing Impairment and Visual impairment
- Acoustic Design for schools and Building Bulletin 93.

7. Review

The Equality Act 2010 requires SBC to keep its Accessibility Strategy under review during the period to which it relates and revise it if necessary. This strategy is the responsibility of the SEND team within the Learning & People Directorate.

It will be monitored by officers within that service.

The Accessibility Action Plan will be monitored and governed by the SEN Strategic Board.

Appendix 1: Legislative basis

1. Definition of disability and special educational needs

Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines a disability as when a person has a physical or mental impairment:

- which is substantial and long-term (for over a year)
- which has an adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

This broad definition covers physical disabilities, sensory impairments, such as those affecting sight or hearing, learning disabilities and some specified medical conditions.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The SEND Code of Practice: 0 - 25 years, 2015 states that:

A child or young person has SEN if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:

- a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
- b) has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post-16 institutions

P15 SEND Code of Practice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

The broad areas of need described are:

- Communication and interaction
- Cognition and learning
- Social, emotional and mental health
- Sensory and/or physical

2. The Equality Act 2010

The General or Public Sector Equality Duty

Section 149 the Equality Act 2010 introduces a single general duty (sometimes referred to as the Public Sector Equality Duty or PSED) that applies to public bodies, including county councils and all educational settings.

The General Duty (PSED) extends to all aspects of a person's identity. These aspects are known as 'protected characteristics' and include race, disability, sex, age, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage & civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity.

The three main elements of the general duty are, that in carrying out their functions, public bodies are required to have due regard to:

- eliminating discrimination and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act
- advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it

The Specific Duties of the Equality Act

The main specific duties are:

- not to treat pupils/students with SEND less favourably
- the reasonable adjustments duty - to take reasonable steps to avoid putting pupils/students with SEND at a substantial disadvantage.

The reasonable adjustments duty (schedule 13 of the Equality Act 2010)

The duty to make reasonable adjustments requires schools to take positive steps to ensure that pupils/students with SEND can fully participate in the education provided by that setting, and that they can enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services provided for all pupils/students.

The 2010 Act sets out three requirements in relation to reasonable adjustments:

- where a provision, criterion or practice of a school puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage
- where a physical feature puts a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to avoid the disadvantage
- where a disabled person would, but for the provision of an auxiliary aid, be put at a substantial disadvantage in relation to a relevant matter in comparison with persons who are not disabled, to take such steps as it is reasonable to have to take to provide the auxiliary aid.

Many reasonable adjustments are inexpensive and will often involve a change in practice rather than the provision of expensive pieces of equipment or additional staff.

Anticipating reasonable adjustments

A school's duty to make reasonable adjustments is an **anticipatory** one and therefore the setting needs to make plans in advance about what pupils/students with SEND might require and what adjustments might need to be made. They should not wait until the pupils/students are on roll.

Auxiliary aids and services

In September 2012 the duty to provide auxiliary aids and services (including specialist equipment which could include laptops and tablets) was extended to include schools. This places schools under a duty to provide aids and services where it is reasonable and where it would prevent a disabled pupil being put at a substantial disadvantage when compared to his or her non-disabled peers. The exception to this duty is where the aid or service is specified in a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan in which case the responsibility to provide the aid or service lies with the LA.

Examples of auxiliary aids include coloured layovers, pen grips, adapted physical education equipment, adapted keyboards and computer software.

The relevant Local Authority support team will provide appropriate training and support in the use of auxiliary aids.

Overcoming disadvantage

Where something an educational setting does places a pupil/student with SEND at a disadvantage, compared to other pupils/students, then the setting must take reasonable steps to try and avoid that disadvantage.

SEND Information Report

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 states that a school's reasonable adjustments, along with other provisions, must be described in their 'SEN Information Report'. The 'SEN Information Report' for schools in Southend can be found on the Local Offer site

Ref: p17 SEND Code of Practice: 0-25

Ref: p91 SEND Code of Practice: 0-25

School Accessibility Plans

Schools must also publish Accessibility Plans. The Accessibility Plans should be appended to or be part of the SEN Information Report.

3. The Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25

The Children and Families Act came into force on the 1st September 2014. Part 3 of this Act and associated regulations reformed the duties, policies and procedures relating to children and young people with SEND.

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 provides statutory guidance relating to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act. The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 promotes inclusive education and describes how the Equality Act.2010 and the Children and Families Act, 2014 work together to ensure this:

'As part of its commitments under articles 7 and 24 of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the UK Government is committed to inclusive education of disabled children and young people and the progressive removal of barriers to learning and participation in mainstream education. The Children and Families Act 2014 secures the general presumption in law of mainstream education in relation to decisions about where children and young people with SEN should be educated and the Equality Act 2010 provides protection from discrimination for disabled people.'

Admissions

The SEND Code of Practice emphasises that educational settings including further education establishments must not have discriminatory admissions policies. It states that:

'The Equality Act 2010 prohibits schools from discriminating against disabled children and young people in respect of admissions for a reason related to their disability.'

Where a child or young person has SEN but does not have an Education Health and Care Plan they must be educated in a mainstream setting except in specific circumstances set out in the SEND Code of Practice: 0-25'.

Putting the child/young person with SEND and their family at the centre

The SEND Code of Practice: 0-25 states that local authorities must have regard to:

- the views, wishes and feelings of the child or young person and their parents
- the importance of the child or young person and their parents participating as fully as possible in decisions; and being provided with the information and support necessary to enable participation in those decisions
- the need to support the child or young person, and their parents, in order to facilitate the development of the child or young person and to help them achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes, preparing them effectively for adulthood.

and that local authorities must ensure the following:

- the participation of children, young people and their parents in decision making;
- the early identification of children and young people's needs and early intervention to support them
- greater choice and control for young people and parents over the support they receive
- collaboration between education, health and social care services to provide support;
- high quality provision to meet the needs of children and young people with SEN;
- a focus on inclusive practice and removing barriers to learning
- successful preparation for adulthood, including independent living and employment.

4. Key legislation and guidance references

Equality Act 2010:

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf

Equality Act: Schedule 10

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/schedule/10>

Equality Act 2010: Guidance on matters to be taken into account in determining questions relating to the definition of disability (specifically schedule 10).

<https://www.gov.uk/definition-of-disability-under-equality-act-2010>

The Equality Act 2010 and schools: Departmental advice for school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and local authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>

Reasonable adjustments for disabled pupils (2012): Technical guidance from the Equality and Human Rights Commission

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/what-are-reasonable-adjustments>

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2014) (DFE)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions>

Children and Families Act 2014

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted>

The Special Educational needs and Disability Regulations 2014

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2014/1530/pdfs/uksi_20141530_en.pdf

SEND Code of Practice 2014 revised 2015

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25>

The Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice: Protecting the vulnerable (2005)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice>

Lighting Guide 05: Lighting for Education

<https://www.cibse.org/getmedia/48791806-244f-4d32-baaf-5a80f41534f0/PR-HCNE-Present-Jan-2012.pdf.aspx>

BB93 Acoustic Design of Schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bb93-acoustic-design-of-schools-performance-standards>

Appendix 2: Support for educational settings and parent carers

The following documents can be found on the Southend Local Offer website

- Accessibility Audit Tool
- Accessibility Plan Template

Southend's Local Offer

The Local Offer is published by Southend Help & Information Point (SHIP) and sets out, in one place, the support and provision that is available for children and young people with SEND and their families. It enables children and young people and their families to make informed choices about support and provision and is used to review and develop provision in Southend. The Local Offer includes:

- universal services such as schools and doctors
- targeted services for children/ young people with SEND who need short-term support that is over and above that provided by universal services and
- specialised services for children and young people with SEND who require specialist and long term support.

Accessibility Audit Tool for Educational Settings

School	Date of completion
Name of person who completed audit	Role of person who completed audit

1. Is your educational setting compliant with the Equality Act 2010?

	Question	Yes ✓	If yes – where can the evidence be found?	No ✓	If no - action to be taken and where recorded in Access Plan
1	Do you have an Accessibility Plan?				
2	Was your accessibility plan coproduced with children/young people with SEND, their families and other stakeholders?				
3	Is everyone in your setting aware of the Equality Act 2010?				
4	Do you have evidence that your setting does not treat pupils/students less favourably and takes reasonable steps to avoid putting disabled pupils/students at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers?				

5	Do you have evidence that your school community endeavours to see the child/young person with SEND first and their disability second? (e.g. disability awareness training, education plans which build on a child/young person's strengths as well as addressing their difficulties)				
6	Have you published your SEN information report?				
7	Is your SEN information report linked to the Local Offer?				
8	Do all staff understand the needs of the pupils/students and support them accordingly?				
9	Do you have inclusive, whole school policies, processes and practices?				
10	Do you proactively include pupils/students with SEND, and their families, in all enrichment activities?				
11	Do you celebrate the strengths of pupils/students with SEND and focus on building on what they can do rather than what they find difficult.				
12	Are pupils/students involved in the recruitment of teaching assistants and other school staff?				

2. Is your setting physically accessible?

	Question	Yes ✓	If yes – where can the evidence be found?	No ✓	If no - action to be taken and where recorded in Access Plan
1	Are your buildings adapted to ensure that the majority of areas are physically accessible for people with disabilities?				
2	If adaptations are not possible have you found creative solutions to ensure inclusion e.g. moving classes to accessible classrooms?				
3	Are pathways around the setting and parking arrangements safe, easily accessible and well signed?				
4	Are emergency and evacuation systems accessible to all e.g. do alarms have both visual and auditory components?				
5	Are accessible toilets and changing facilities located appropriately and not used for other purposes e.g. storage?				
6	Are calm low sensory areas available in the setting?				
7	Are your rooms (including classrooms) optimally organised for pupils/students with a physical disability?				

8	Are classroom interiors adapted to ensure access to all areas for pupils/students with sensory needs e.g. using drapes to reduce noise levels and removing clutter to ensure safe access?				
9	Is furniture and equipment selected, adjusted and located appropriately?				
10	If needed, and possible, are classroom partitions installed in open plan areas to ensure access for pupils/students with sensory difficulties?				
11	If intercom messages are used are they always relayed to pupils/students with hearing impairments?				
12	Are all signs and symbols in Braille for pupils with visual impairments and in picture form for those with communication and learning difficulties?				
13	Are highly visible markings used to ensure the safety of pupils/students with a visual impairment?				
14	Do you consult with pupils/students with SEND regarding the accessibility of classrooms, toilets and changing facilities etc.?				

3. Is your setting inclusive?

	Question	Yes ✓	If yes – where can the evidence be found?	No ✓	If no - action to be taken and where recorded in Access Plan
1	Is accessible signage used, throughout the setting's environment, at all activities and events?				
2	Are pupils/students with SEND included in pupil/student forums e.g. school councils				
3	Is personalised and creative support arranged so that pupils/students can access all activities including trips /visits and afterschool and break time activities?				
4	Do you ensure that financial difficulties do not prevent pupils/students with SEND being included in activities and events?				
5	Do you ensure that transition from setting to setting is carefully planned and personalised for pupils/students with SEND?				
6	Do you find creative and flexible solutions to ensure that pupils/students with SEND can move easily between classrooms?				
7	Do you use targeted, small group and/or individual activities to improve self-esteem, confidence and social skills?				

8	Do you work closely with families (and the Early Help Team if appropriate) to improve attendance?				
9	Do you take proactive measures to overcome bullying by implementing anti-bullying policies and approaches				
10	Are pupils/students with SEND and their families given explicit information about trips and activities well in advance so that preparations can be made by their families?				

4. Is the curriculum accessible?

	Question	Yes ✓	If yes – where can the evidence be found?	No ✓	If no - action to be taken and where recorded in Access Plan
1	Do staff have high aspirations and expectations of pupils/students with SEND?				
2	Do staff have regular and updated training re additional needs and how the needs can be met?				
3	Are children with disabilities encouraged to take part in Music, drama and physical activities?				

4	Do class teachers/PE staff know how to include pupils/students with disabilities in PE?				
5	Are pupils/students and their families fully involved in the review of individual plans regarding curriculum access?				
6	Do you use a graduated approach when meeting the needs of pupils/students with SEND?				
7	Do you use the 'assess, plan, do review' cycle to inform the graduated approach?				
8	Is the attainment gap between pupils/students with SEND and those without SEND being reduced over time (whilst ensuring the high achievement of the most able)?				
9	Is the progress made by your pupils/students at 'SEN support' and with an EHC plan is as good as that made by pupils/students with SEN nationally?				
10	Do you ensure that homework is accessible to all e.g. by setting homework early in lessons, putting it online (and giving it to families in hard copy who do not have access to the internet)?				
11	Are cover staff, including supply teachers, clear about the additional needs of pupils/students and how to meet these needs?				
12	Are staff given time to plan for pupils/students who need a highly differentiated/individualised curriculum?				

13	Do pupils/students with SEND have access to appropriate information technology?				
14	Do all additional adults, including teaching assistant, build positive relationships, support flexibly and facilitating independent learning?				
15	Are auxiliary aids used to ensure that pupils/students with SEND are included in the curriculum?				

5. How accessible is information, advice and guidance?

	Question	Yes ✓	If yes – where can the evidence be found?	No ✓	If no - action to be taken and where recorded in Access Plan
1	Are your SEN Information Report and Accessibility Plan online and in hard copy (for those families who do not have internet access)?				
2	Do you promote the 'Southend Information, Advice and Support Service' (SIASS) and Independent Supporters?				

3	Do you work with parent/carers and young people to ensure that your website is presented in a family friendly way?				
4	Do you hold review meetings etc. at times when parents are able to attend?				
5	Have you developed communication channels and review processes that enable two-way information sharing with families?				
6	Is information available in a variety of languages?				
7	Is information available in a variety of formats including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'easy read' - large print - symbols - audio 				
8	Are staff familiar with IT used to share information with people with disabilities?				
9	Do you ensure that pupils/students know exactly who they can contact for information, advice and support?				
10	Do you give children/young people and their families' information about Southend Help & Information Point (SHIP), the Local Offer and Southend Information, Advice and Support Service (SIASS)?				
11	Do you signpost families without the internet to libraries to access information and the Local Offer?				

12	Do you use the Local Offer and Southend Learning Network to keep up-to-date with SEND developments?				

Detailed Physical Access Check List

Consider each question from the perspective of each type of disability

1 of 9 Approach and Car Parking

	Question	Yes	No	Action to be taken and recorded in Access Plan
1	Is the building within convenient distance of a public highway?			
2	Is the building within convenient distance of public transport?			
3	Is the building within convenient distance of car parking?			
4	Is the route clearly marked/found?			
5	Is the route free of kerbs?			
6	Is the surface smooth and slip resistant?			
7	Is the route wide enough?			
8	Is it free of such hazards as bollards, litter bins, outward opening windows and doors or overhanging projections?			
9	Is it adequately lit?			
10	Is it identified by visual, audible and tactile information?			
11	Is there car parking for people with reduced mobility?			
12	Is the car parking clearly marked out, signed, easily found and kept free from misuse?			
13	Is the car parking as near the entrance as possible?			
14	Is the car parking are suitably surfaced?			

15	Is the route to the building kept free of snow, ice and fallen leaves?			
16	Is the route level? (i.e. no gradient steeper than 1:20 and no steps)			

2 of 9 Routes and external level change including ramps and steps

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is there a ramp, with level surfaces at top/intermediate/bottom?			
2	Is it wide enough and suitably graded?			
3	Is the surface slip resistant?			
4	Are there kerbs and are there edges protected to prevent accidents?			
5	Are there handrails to one or both sides?			
6	Are there (alternative) steps & ramp			
7	Identified by visual/tactile information?			
8	Are there handrails to one or both sides?			
9	Are ramps and steps adequately lit?			
10	Are treads and risers consistent in depth and height?			
11	Are all nosings marked and/or readily identifiable?			
12	Are landings of adequate size and are they provided at intermediate levels in long flights?			

3 of 9 Entrances – including Reception

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is the door clearly distinguishable from the façade?			
2	If glass is it visible when closed?			
3	Does the clear door opening or one leaf when opened permit passage of a wheelchair or double buggy?			

4	Does it have a level or flush threshold, and a recessed matwell?			
5	Is there visibility through the doorway from both sides at standing and seated levels?			
6	Is there a minimum 300mm wide wheelchair manoeuvre space beside the leading edge of the door to clear doorswing?			
7	Can the door furniture be used at both standing and seated height?			
8	Can it be easily grasped and operated?			
9	If the door has a closer mechanism does it have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed closure action? • Slow-action closer? • Minimal closure pressure? 			
10	If the door is power-operated does it have visual and tactile information?			
11	If the door is security-protected is the system suitable for use by and within reach of people with sensory or mobility impairments?			
12	If there is a lobby, do the inner and outer doors meet the same criteria?			
13	Do lobby layouts enable all users to clear one door before going through the next?			
14	Are signs designed and positioned to inform those with visual impairments and wheelchair users with reduced eye levels?			
15	Does the lighting installation take account of the needs of visually disabled people?			
16	Are floor spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slip resistant, even when wet? 			

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of a quality that is sympathetic to acoustics – ie not so 'hard' as to cause acoustic confusion? • Firm for wheelchair manoeuvre 			
17	Are junctions between floor surfaces arranged in a way that avoids presenting tripping hazards and causing visual confusion?			
18	Is any reception point suitable for approach and use from both sides by people in standing and seated positions?			
19	Is it fitted with an induction loop?			
20	For those progressing to other parts of the building is information provided by signs, supported by tactile information such as a map or model?			

4 of 9 Horizontal Movement and Assembly

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is each corridor/passageway/aisle wide enough for a wheelchair user to manoeuvre and for other people to pass?			
2	Is each corridor etc. free from obstruction to wheelchair users and from hazards to people with impaired vision?			
3	Do any lobbies allow users (including wheelchair users) to clear one door before approaching the next with minimal manoeuvre			
4	Is turning space available for wheelchair users?			
5	Do natural and artificial lighting avoid glare and silhouetting?			
6	Are there visual clues for orientation?			
7	Do floor surfaces: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow ease of movement for wheelchair users? • Avoid light reflection and sound reverberation? 			

8	Are direction or information signs (including means of escape) visible from both sitting and standing eye levels, and are they in upper and lower case, and large enough type to be read by those with impaired vision?			
9	Are there tactile signs and information for those with impaired vision?			
10	Is the maintenance of these items checked regularly?			
11	Is lighting designed to meet a wide range of needs?			
12	Is sufficient circulation space allowed for wheelchair users?			
13	Is it maintained clear of obstructions which could create hazards for people with visual disabilities?			
14	Are seating arrangements/spaces suitable for use by people with visual disabilities?			
15	Are all areas for assembly/meeting equipped with an induction loop system?			

5 of 9 Doors

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Do the doors serve a functional/safety purpose?			
2	If glass, are they visible when shut?			
3	Can people standing or sitting in a wheelchair see each other, and be seen from either side of the door?			
4	Does the clear opening width permit wheelchair access			
5	On the opening side of the door is there sufficient space (300mm) to allow the door handle to be grasped and the door swung past a wheelchair footplate?			
6	Is any door furniture/handle at a height for standing/sitting use?			
7	Are door/handles clearly distinguished?			
8	Can the door furniture/handles be easily operated/grasped?			

9	If door closers/mechanisms are fitted do they provide the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security linkage? • delay-action closure? • Slow-action closure? • Minimum closure pressure? 			
10	Is door/mechanism function checked regularly?			

6 of 9 Toilets

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is WC provision made for people with disabilities?			
2	Do all lavatory areas have slip-resistant floors?			
3	Are all fittings readily distinguishable from their background?			
4	Are all door fittings/locks easily gripped and operated?			
5	Can ambulant disabled people manoeuvre and raise and lower themselves in standard cubicles?			
6	Is provision made for wheelchair users in disabled toilets?			
7	Is wheelchair approach free of steps/narrow doors/obstructions etc.?			
8	Is the location clearly signed?			
9	Is there sufficient space at entry to the compartment for wheelchair manoeuvre and door opening?			
10	Are the door fittings/locks and light switches easily reached and operated?			
11	Is there an emergency call system and is someone designated to respond?			
12	Can the emergency call system be operated from floor level?			

13	Is the wheelchair WC compartment large enough to permit manoeuvre for frontal lateral/angled/backward transfer, with or without assistance?			
14	Are the fittings arranged to facilitate these manoeuvres			
15	Are handwashing and drying facilities within reach of someone seated on the WC?			
16	Is the tap appropriate for use by someone with limited dexterity, grip or strength?			
17	Are suitable grab rails fitted in all the appropriate positions to facilitate use of the WC?			
18	Is the manoeuvring area free of obstruction, e.g. boxed-in pipework/radiators/cleaner's equipment/disposal bins/occasional storage, etc. and is any difficulty caused by the activity of service contractors?			
19	If there is more than one standard layout WC compartment provided, are they handed to offer a left-sided approach and a right-sided approach?			

7 of 9 Fixtures and Fittings

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is any server/counter accessible to all users, including those with hearing impairments?			
2	Is it possible for people with disabilities to serve as volunteers?			
3	Where there are display stands, bookstalls etc. are they visible/reachable/accessible by people with disabilities?			
4	In any eating/meeting space do tables, chairs and the layout allow for use by wheelchair users and other people with disabilities?			

5	In any staff accommodation is it suitable for use by people with disabilities including wheelchair users with slip-resistant floor, reduced level kitchen units and sink and lever action taps?			
6	Are all relevant locations clearly signed?			

8 of 9 Information

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is the building equipped to provide hearing assistance?			
2	Does lighting installation of the building take into account the needs of people with visual disabilities?			
3	Are there large-print versions of information about the building/activities available?			
4	Is there braille information available for people with visual disabilities?			

9 of 9 Means of Escape

	Question	Y	N	Action Point
1	Is there a visible as well as audible fire alarm system?			
2	Are final exit routes as accessible to all, including wheelchair users, as are the entry routes?			
3	Is there a 'management evacuation strategy' for staff, pupils and visitors, and are staff trained in evacuation procedures?			

4	Is the evacuation strategy checked regularly for its effectiveness?			
5	Are evacuation routes checked routinely and regularly for freedom from combustible materials/obstacles/locked doors?			
6	Are all fire warning devices and detectors checked routinely and regularly			